Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/04/28 : CIA-RDP91-00587R000100720049-1

STAT

3

FT. LAUDERDALE NEWS (FL)
20 June 1985

Editorials

CIA must not be allowed to abuse censorship rules

AMERICA'S Central Intelligence Agency has the legal right, and the need, to prevent former employees from publishing books disclosing secrets that compromise national security.

But the CIA has no need, and should not have the legal right, to engage in unjustified censorship of harmless material.

Unfortunately, according to Admiral Stansfield Turner, a former CIA director, the CIA is abusing its rules and engaging in Big Brother-style censorship not needed to protect government secrets.

Turner charges that high-level Reagan Administration CIA officials forced him to remove more than 100 passages, including a lot of non-secret material, from his new book, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition,* before they would let him publish it.

Among the censored items, he says, were quotes from his own public speeches and passages taken from former President Jimmy Carter's memoirs.

If true, that kind of abuse of power is stupid, senseless and far in excess of the CIA's proper authority to review publication of books by former employees.

The case is loaded with irony. Turner was caught in a trap that he helped make. In 1978, when Turner was serving as Carter's CIA director, he was instrumental in pressing then Attorney General Griffin Bell to prosecute former CIA employee Frank Snepp Jr. for publishing a book about the CIA, *Decent Interval,* without getting the required CIA clearance.

The U.S. Supreme Court allowed the government to seize $60,000 in Snepp's profits.

CIA officials have not commented on Turner's charges, but if they did harass Turner, the motivation to do so is there. Many people on the Reagan team have never forgiven Turner for what they consider gutting the CIA in his "Halloween Massacre" of Oct. 31, 1977, at which he reduced staff in the espionage section by 822 positions, some by early retirement and some by firing.

Also, his book is candidly critical of the CIA under Reagan-appointed director William Casey, especially its resistance to congressional scrutiny. He also documents a series of foulups that he says could lead to a severe loss of public credibility and resultant harm to the U.S. intelligence-gathering ability.

The Turner case should not be swept under the rug. Congressional hearings should be held to determine the validity of Turner's charges. If warranted, changes in the law should be made to ensure that CIA censorship power is severely restricted to halting disclosure of real secrets, not to harassing critics to prevent the public from knowing the truth.

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/04/28 : CIA-RDP91-00587R000100720049-1